



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington DC 20420

September 13, 2019

In Reply Refer To: 001B
FOIA Request: 19-09069-F

Via email: 76321-05452623@requests.muckrock.com; jclarkcraven@gmail.com

Jasper Craven
MuckRock News
DEPT MR 76321
411A Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Dear Mr. Craven,

This is the Initial Agency Decision (IAD) to the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (OSVA) dated and received June 30, 2019, and assigned FOIA Tracking number **19-09069-F**. You requested, in your words, Emails between VA Secretary Robert Wilkie and top officials at the VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations, including Stephanie Birdwell, Peter Vicaire between July 23, 2018 and present day. Key words include: "plan," "trump," "benefits claims," "meeting," "cost," "Tribal Advisory Committee Act," "tribe," "visit," "tribal organization," "NCAI."

IAD and Reasonable Searches Dated 8/13/19, 8/20/19, & 9/13/19

On August 13, 2019, our search cut-off date, the OSVA FOIA Officer requested that the VA IT office search for and provide all responsive records within the email boxes of Robert Wilkie with the date timeframe of July 23, 2018, to August 13, 2019. On August 20, 2019, the VA IT office completed its search.

On September 13, 2019, the OSVA FOIA Officer conducted a follow-up search through the email boxes of Robert Wilkie for any emails with Stephanie Birdwell and Peter Vicaire from July 23, 2019, to August 13, 2019. Despite the August 13, 2019, August 20, 2019, and September 13, 2019 searches, OSVA found no responsive records. Thus, OSVA issues you a "no records" response.

FOIA Mediation

As part of the 2007 FOIA amendments, the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. Under the provisions of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, the following contact information is provided to assist FOIA requesters in resolving disputes:

VA Central Office FOIA Public Liaison:

Name: John Buck
Email Address: vacofoiaservice@va.gov

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

Email Address: ogis@nara.gov
Fax: 202-741-5769
Mailing address:
National Archives and Records Administration

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8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

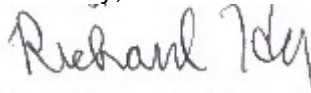
FOIA Appeal

This concludes OSVA's IAD to request **19-09069-F**. Please be advised that should you desire to do so, you may appeal the determination made in this response to:

Office of General Counsel (024)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

If you should choose to file an appeal, please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly indicate the basis for your disagreement with the determination set forth in this response. Please be advised that in accordance with VA's implementing FOIA regulations at 38 C.F.R. § 1.559, your appeal must be postmarked no later than ninety (90) days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard Ha".

Richard Ha, JD, CIPP/G
OSVA FOIA Officer